

DRAFT (1)

17 March 1970

MEMORANDUM FOR: DD/I

SUBJECT : Decoupling the NIPP: Some Problems
on Adjustment

1. I think we are all aware of the potential advantages of transferring responsibility for preparing long-term planning projections like the NIPP to the military in general and DIA in particular. Less ~~often~~ ^{attention} ~~this~~ has been devoted, however, to the related problems of adjustment which would probably arise. This memorandum explores the probable impact of such a transfer on the DCI's role in support of long-range strategic planning and national decision-making. Another memorandum in preparation will discuss its impact on CIA's responsibility for military costing.

2. Transfer of the NIPP to DIA would relieve the DCI of direct responsibility for the projections contained in it, but would not enable him to go scot free. The record of the last year makes clear that he is likely to be under recurrent pressure from various quarters to express his judgment (and that of the intelligence community) regarding the validity of the projections used by DoD and the services in support

of major policy recommendations.

3. Key Congressional committees, Executive Branch decision-makers outside the Pentagon, and even some Defense Department officials are likely to want an independent reading and as a result those using the projections in support of policy recommendations will often wish to secure the DCI's blessing in advance. Thus the DCI will continue to be faced with questions on the projections, with requests from the Secretary of Defense's office and elsewhere that he check out presentations using the projections, and possibly with requests that, either unilaterally or through USIB, he provide some general blessing for the NIPP tables as a whole.

4. For the DCI to give up responsibility for drafting the NIPP and then accept the task of providing any formal blessing for the product -- either personally or through USIB -- would be self-defeating. In relinquishing control over the drafting he would be substantially reducing his ability, in practical terms, to influence the tone and content of the final product. This type of USIB review is undertaken each year in the case of the MC-161 NATO intelligence estimate, which is drafted by DIA, but on the basis that it is a specialized document, designed for a

particular military purpose, which need not reflect all the nuances of interpretation contained in the corresponding NIEs. This is not justification which would carry much weight in the case of the NIPP, which is obviously used as a justification for national decision-making as well as for purely military analysis and planning.

5. The Director would probably also wish to avoid as much as possible being called upon to endorse (or suggest alternatives to) specific projections and related planning assumptions produced by DIA -- all the more so in that there would be ~~no~~[§]body of CIA-produced or USIB-endorsed material on hand as a basis for comment.

6. Conceivably, he could tell his questioners that these were purely military projections, turned out in support of staff planning in the Pentagon, and no more the intelligence community's responsibility than the masses of similarly imaginary numbers churned out by the contractors on behalf of the services. He could repeat the old -- and still valid -- arguments as to why such projections had been deliberately excluded from the NIE's themselves.

7. It seems to me, however, that this would be unsatisfactory. To follow this course would in effect

be to abrogate the Director's rights and responsibilities to provide intelligence advice in support of long-term national security planning. Even if he were prepared to take this line, he would probably find it difficult to sustain.

8. Accordingly, we would argue that the DCI, if he relinquishes responsibility for the NIPP, will have to stake out -- preferably in the NIE's as well as in his own statements -- a positive position on the long-range threat problem that he can use effectively in support of the policy-makers. To some extent this will consist of specific projections and estimative judgments in the NIE's. But there will continue to be important limits on what can be put into the NIE's without blurring the distinctions between estimates of what is probable and intelligence projections for planning, which can't claim to be much more than reasonable ones.

9. Hence the Director's pronouncements on long-term strategic planning issues would probably have to place considerable stress on the element of uncertainty in long-range projections, along the lines of the 11-8-69 discussion of why we couldn't project a high-side ICBM figure with any confidence. Essentially, he would be concerned not so much with endorsing or rejecting specific DIA NIPP projections (unless they were clearly

inconsistent with CIA Community judgment) as with
defining the realm of the possible and the latitude
for variation within it.